

AZCCC DX & TX Committee Meeting Minutes 3-19-07

Attendance: Kendra Sabol, Bill McMullen (via phone), Becky Howard, Jessica Han, Suzanne Hyde, Marisue Garganta, Nicole Olmstead

Cancer Treatment Coverage Issues

Bill McMullen gave an update on the Noridian/CMS ablative therapy reversal in coverage issue.

Overview

Noridian, the administrator for Medicare for 5-6 states including Arizona, regrouped recently and the fall out from this was that they will no longer cover ablative therapies as of March 15th. This is a reversal in coverage and will impact cancer patients throughout Arizona.

Bill McMullen, the DX and TX co-chair has been working with Dr. Mangold to appeal this reversal of coverage by CMS.

The Diagnosis and Treatment Committee sent a recommendation to the Steering Committee that the AZCCC endorses the letter that presents a united request for the reconsideration of Noridian Administrative Services (NAS) final Local Coverage Decision titled "Ablative Therapy: intra-Thoracic and Intra-Abdominal". Other endorsements and support on this letter are: Society of Interventional Radiology, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American college of Radiology, American College of Chest Physicians, and the Alliance of Dedicated Freestanding Cancer Centers.

Kendra sent a letter to the Steering Committee for their comments and action. The Steering Committee initially denied action on this item but has since provided us the ability to present this to the Coalition at the March 27th meeting for further review. It should be noted that this is a very time sensitive issue...

This circumstance has brought to light the importance for the AZCCC to not only have the ability to advocate strongly on behalf of Arizona citizens in terms of covered therapies and other high stakes issues, but that the AZCCC needs a structure in place to make decisions and move to action quickly in order to be an effective and influential advocate.

In the meantime, as of March 15, 2007 cancer patients in Arizona will not be provided coverage by Medicare for procedures they had on March 14, and most states still have.

TO DO Bill will get this letter to the AzPHA's Barbara Burkholder to inform and get support. (Marisue Garganta is on the Board of Directors)

TO DO Becky will present this issue to the AZCCC at the March 27, 2007 meeting; specifically pushing the conversation for the AZCCC to develop a stronger advocacy component and a fast track system for urgent issues.

Committee Structure and Recruitment and Retention

Bill McMullen has proposed that specific sub-committees of Task Forces are formed to manage the on-going as well as current projects of the DX and TX Committee.

Meetings: It was suggested that a calendar for meetings should be set for the year to encourage consistent commitments and easy scheduling. Teleconference should be available for all meetings.

Structure: It was suggested that the structure of the committee should define how work gets done, how members are recruiting, what is expected with participation and how we communicate not only with each other but with other subcommittees.

TO DO At the next meeting a draft recruitment letter should be created for the group to utilize until the Coalition as a whole develops specific recruitment tools.

Telemedicine

A representative from the CVD Coalition presented on their telemed project.

Via Prop 303 a stroke telemed project "Stroke Doc" began. This one year project that enlists two hospitals, a treatment center and \$300,000 in the Kingman and Yuma areas pilots a mobile telemed program. Emergency room staff in the outlying area notifies a neurologist at the Mayo who has been equipped with the technology to viewing the tests and the patient from wherever he/she is located at the time. An assessment is done by the neurologist and recommended treatments and medications are prescribed immediately, the patient is then evacuated to the Mayo. This project requires agreements between the patient, the patient's doctor, the neurologist and the primary stroke center.

The partners in this project are: NIH, UCSD, Mayo, and ADHS.

TO DO Inquire with U of A telemed projects staff (Dr. Ana Marie Lopez and staff) if any project like this is being done or coming down the pipeline for cancer.

DISCUSSION OPPORTUNITY How can telemedicine be utilized in the state of Arizona to deliver accessible, timely quality cancer care?

The next meeting of the DX and TX Committee will be held on May 21st. Time and location to be determined. (3 pm at St. Joes most likely) The agenda will center upon recruitment and retention.